



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad  
Administration**

# Memorandum

Date: June 15, 1998

Reply to Att. of: MP&E 98-29

Subject: Freight Cars Derailed/Damaged on Short Line Railroads

From: Edward R. English  
Director, Office of Safety Assurance and Compliance

To: Regional Administrators, Deputy Regional Administrators,  
Motive Power & Equipment Specialists and Inspectors

During an inspection on a "Short Line Railroad", it was discovered that some tank cars equipped with roller bearings were derailed and sustained damages. These cars were not repaired and the roller bearings were not examined as required, prior to delivery to a connecting railroad. Also, the short line railroad did not advise the receiving railroad of the derailment damage and associated damages.

If a train crew performing an Appendix D inspection at the interchange point did not detect the defective condition of these cars, the cars would have continued in service in a defective condition.

Many short line railroads operate over questionable or "Excepted Track" that often is the cause of derailments. Further, some short line railroads do not have qualified inspectors or repair facilities. Some short lines have agreements with the interchange railroads to effect repairs to defective cars, which fall under their responsibility.

Due to the seriousness of a defective car continuing in service and/or the possible failure of a short line to notify the receiving railroad of a defective car, each region should review the proper handling of defective cars with each short line railroad within their region.

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